Box No: 97/8 : File No: 3

No of sheets - 63

MYS PALACE PAPER

India and Western Religious Thought – Christendom II

When Christianity was accepted by the Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem and the movement spread in the Non-Jewish parts of the Roman Empire, it assumed Graeco-Roman and Graeco-Oriental forms of expression. The mystery-religions were common to both these types of thinking. Primitive Christianity is a mystery religion, a way of living. Early Christians formed a mystery group, meeting in secret and having an inner and outer circle. Christ answers to the Gnostic Saviour God, the Logos, and the Idea of the Universe. Legends of the death and resurrection of the suffering deities and heroes, Osiris, Attis, and Adonis were well-known and utilized. The ritual meal of the Mithra cult suggests the love-feast of the early Christian communities. Every religion has to speak the language which its adherents will understand and set its theology in forms which are intelligible to its generation. So naturally Christianity grew up in its own environment and couched its beliefs and aspirations in terms familiar to its world. Besides the Christian message could not have

won its way if it had not found an echo in the religious searchings and beliefs of the time. Christianity breathed the same air and developed in the same world as Alexandrian Judaism, Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism.

The training which St Paul had at Tarsus enabled him to know the currents of thought and he expressed his theology in words to which his audience was accustomed. For Paul, Jesus is only the Lord and not God. He distinguishes between the heathens with their "gods many and Lords many", and Christians who have "One God — the Father, and one Lord-Jesus Christ." The familiar distinction between god head and god is here employed. Incorruption, eternity, and invisibility are the characteristics of the Godhead. The one God is inconceivable: "The things of whom knoweth no man", whose judgements are unsearchable, "his ways past finding out," "who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see." Jesus becomes the redeemer lord who is the source of salvation both in this world and the world to come. The Messianic idea of the Jews becomes confused with the Logos of the Greeks. The insistence on the Neo Platonic idea of the Logos is so great as to reduce the human life of

3. Jesus to a mere illusive appearance. If the name of Jesus is employed it is only in a symbolic way, for St. Paul says how "all our fathers drank of the Spiritual rock which is Christ" and Christ can be formed in each one of us. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he says "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more." We often hear from St Paul the words, "I say this of the Lord", "I say this of myself." Thus he makes a clear distinction between the truths revealed to him, and the conclusions he reaches by his own powers of reasoning. He speaks of a gnosis, a higher knowledge which can be taught only to the initiated. His Christianity is founded on a vision and records the ecstatic vision, in which he was "caught up into the third Heaven" and saw things unutterable. In St Paul, Jesus becomes the centre of a cult where baptism and the commemoration of the Last Supper take the place of the Sacrament of the Mysteries. Loisy gives the following summary of St. Paul's conception of Jesus. "He was a saviour god after the manner of an Osiris, an attis, a Mithra. Like them he belonged by his origin to the celestial world; like them he had made his appearance on the earth; like them he had accomplished a work of universal redemption, efficacious and typical; like Adonis, Osiris and Attis, he had died a violent death, and like them he had been restored to life; like them he had prefigured in his lot that of human beings who should take part in his

4 [illegible] communicate this Mystic 7
enterprise; like them he had predestined
prepared and assured the salvation of
those who became partners in his passion."
(Hibbert Journal. Oct. 1917. p.51.) Loisy concludes
"These are analogous conceptions, dreams of one
family, built on the same theme with
similar imagery." (p.52).

Conversion as rebirth is affirmed. "If
anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
old things have passed away; behold new
~~are new~~ things have come into being." The
animal must die that God may be brought
to birth. The life, death and resurrection of
Christ are an illustration of a universal
principle. "We are buried with him through
baptism unto death," says Paul to the Romans,
"that like as Christ was raised from the
dead through the glory of the Father, so
we also might walk in newness of life."
Each of us has "the mind of Christ"
the spark of the Spirit. It is active ~~often~~
even in the ordinary individual at his present
stage of evolution, but it can be recovered in
all its glory by a knowledge of the mysteries
of the Kingdom of Heaven. Each of us can become
a perfect man "unto the measure of the
stature of the fullness of Christ." When the
Spirit in us is realized we shall see and
know God as He is and know as we are
immediate vision. Again we have the
well known doctrine of the phenomenality
of the world (Maya) in the saying, "the things
that are seen are temporal but the things
that are ~~unseen~~ not seen are eternal."
"This earthly house of our tabernacle in
which we groan," is a phrase nearer

---

to Orphic than to Greek or Jewish thought. We must turn away from material things for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The Platonic words "fellowship," "participation," "presence" are all found in St. Paul's teachings. His doctrine of the Spirit corresponds to the Platonic Nous. Phrases characteristic of Gnosticism are frequently met with. "We war not against flesh and blood but against the Dominions, the Powers, the Lords of Darkness, the malevolence of the spirits in the upper region. Here in the Epistles to St. Timothy, Gnostic terminology is employed. In Paul we have two conceptions of the Supreme God and Christ, two kinds of knowledge, the reality of mystic experience, the indwelling of God, indifference to ceremonial piety, conversion as rebirth, the need for the crucifixion of the flesh, Salvation as oneness with Christ, to be transformed into oneness with God, with the redemption of the cosmic process. These are all features associated with mystic religion. Dr Schweizer in his book, "The Mysticism of St. Paul" argues that "in Paul there is no God mysticism; only a Christ mysticism by which man comes into relation to God." He looks upon Paul's speech on the Areopagus in Athens which proclaims a God mysticism as un-historical. (E.T. 1937. p viii) He says that "the Hellenization of Christianity does not come in with Paul but only after him."

The First Epistle to St. John uses Ghostic phraseology and we find mystic elements more than in the other discourses. The divine Logos was identified with the gods of ancient cults, and this general tendency is followed by the writer when he looks upon Jesus as the incarnation & the manifestation in word and deed, of the eternal Logos by whom the universe had been created and maintained. The writer was apparently familiar with Philo's views. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us." The pre-existence of Jesus is inferred from such statements as, "And now O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "Before Abraham was, I am." The Logos is not merely the agency — "by Him are all things made" — but also the sustaining power of the universe. Though the revelation of God in Jesus was complete, it is not intelligible to us without the help of Spirit, which is the living and active principle operating in the hearts of Christians. The many things which Jesus said were not communicated to His disciples and the Holy Spirit will communicate them to the future generations. Reality diminishes as it recedes from the centre. There is throughout an insistence on the unity of the whole: "As thou Father art in me and I in Thee; so may they be in us." The contrast between flesh and spirit is present in John. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." He insists so much on the supernatural aspects of the life of

7 Jesus. That in his picture of the Son of Man is lost in the Son of God and he is obliged to assert the real humanity of Jesus. The problem of the relation of God and man gave rise to acute controversies in the Church, and it is still with us. "Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in your selves." Flesh and blood here are the Symbols of Spiritual Sustenance. If this symbolical language is interpreted as the doctrine of the "real presence", we can only say that the primitive belief that the devotee actually partakes of the nature of God if he eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the sacrificed animal, still has its sway over us. Conversion is new birth. "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God." There must be a change from the isolated life of Self to the larger one of love. When it is effected, we say like the blind man who was healed, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." "It is unquestionable that most of the Canonical books of the New Testament, especially the Epistles of St Paul and the Johannine group, do not belong to the Palestinian tradition." Dieterich is, in my opinion, right when he says that "for the chief propositions of Pauline and Johannine theology, the basis of Judaism is wanting." (Inge - "The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought". (1926) pp 10-11.)

The influence of Alexandrine Judaism can be seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the writer seems to be acquainted with the Book of Wisdom and the writings of Philo. He demands conformity to Conventional codes as a preparation for the higher life. The writer looks upon visible things as symbols of higher truths.

In the epistle attributed to St. James we find the phrase "wheel of birth," common to the Indians and the ~~Gnostics~~ Orphics.

Revelation is full of Gnostic ideas. The war in heaven between Michael and all his angels and the dragon & his angels, and the departure of the dragon after defeat, to the earth, "to make war with the rest of her seed that keep the commandments of God" are Iranian eschatology, applied and conformed to the supposed trial fortunes of the Church. Rudolph Otto says "that the fiery dragon is the literal translation of Azhi dahaka (Sanskrit ahidahaka) the aboriginal monster against which Trita fought." That the redeemed will not return to the earth is asserted. "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more" (Revelation iii. 12) Pfleiderer observes, "Jewish prophecy, Rabbinic teaching, Oriental Gnosis, and Greek Philosophy, had already mingled their colours upon the palette from which the portrait of Christ in the New Testament Scriptures was painted" (The Early Christian Conception of Christ).

The Apologists tried to persuade their 17
world that Christianity was the highest
wisdom and absolute truth and used
the concepts of Greek thought for this
purpose. The Apologists accepted the whole
tradition, both the Old and the New, as
ultimate revelation, and so their speculation
though not Greek in character, became the
foundation of Church dogma. Christianity
was represented as the fulfilment of the
aspirations of the Platonic and Stoic systems.
Justin regards Jesus as the incarnate reason.
"Christ was and is the Logos who dwells in
every man." Human systems of philosophy may
be rational but not completely so, while
Christian revelation is the complete truth.
The Apologists are agreed that the first principle
is the Absolute, self existing, unchangeable
and eternal, exalted above every name and
distinction. This first cause is contrasted
with the world, created, conditioned, and
transient. It is one and unique, spiritual
and perfect. The direct author of the world is
not God, but the personified power of reason
which they perceived in the Cosmos. The
Logos is the power of reason which preserves
the unity of God, it is also the revealing
word. It is often identified with the
prophetic spirit. God cannot be without
reason so He has always the Logos in
Himself. The Logos is the visible God, in
relation to God, a creature, the begotten
the created God. He is the principle of vitality
& form of every thing that is to receive being.
Harnack says, "behind this active
Sub Substitute and vice-regent, the Father

Stands in the darkness of the incomprehensible and in the incomprehensible light of perfection as the hidden, unchangeable God."

Irenaeus Irenaeus smelt the heresy of Gnosticism in this distinction between God Head and God, and so affirmed that the... Supreme God and the creator of the world are one and the same. But he agreed with the Gnostics in looking on the deification of human nature as the highest blessing. Though man is subject to the power of death, God intends man to realize immortality. The only way immortality is to be attained is by God's uniting himself with human nature in order that by adoption it might be deified. If men are to become divine, God must become human. "By his birth as man the eternal word of God guarantees the inheritance of life to those who in their natural birth have inherited death."

The chief representatives of Alexandrian Christianity were Clement and Origen. Clement in his "Stromata" uses the Greek philosophy to interpret Christian tradition, even as Philo uses it to expand Judaism. He tells us that God is to be sought in the darkness and reached by way of faith and abstraction. The first cause is above space and time, above speech and thought: "Going forth by ~~away~~ analysis to the first intelligence, taking away depth, breadth, length and position, leaving a Monad, then abstracting what is material, if we cash ourselves into the vastness of Christ, thence if we proceed forward by holiness into his immensity, we may in some fashion enter into the knowledge of the Almighty,

recognizing not what he is, but what he is not."
11. (Quoted in Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics).
He is strictly nameless though we give him names.
God has neither unit nor number, neither
accident nor substance. We use words and
concepts, not because they describe the eternal,
but because we require something to lean
upon. We cannot reach God except through the
Logos. No one comes to the Father except through
Christ. The Logos is the rational law of the world.
Clement tells us that man may become by virtue
like the Son, but not like God, and yet for him
"One is the Father of all, One also the word of all:
It is the light that broods over the cosmic
process and lights every man who comes into
this world. Deification was recognized by
de Clement. "That man with whom the
Logos dwells ---- is made like God --- that
man becomes God."

Clement was deeply influenced through
Basilides, by Buddhist thought. He refers to
the universality of suffering - He quotes Basilides
on rebirth. "Basilides says down that the soul
has previously sinned in another life & endures
its punishment here, the elect with honour
by martyrdom and the rest purified by
appropriate punishment. Clement's interpretation
of the Christian tradition was free and liberal.
He is conscious of it, for he says — "If the things
we say appear to some people to be different
from the Scriptures of the Lord, let them
know that they draw inspiration and life
therefrom, and making these their starting
point, give their meaning only, not their letter.
God is known, though imperfectly, in all
ages and climes, to those who diligently
seek Him and to the Christian He is
revealed in the New Testament as a Triad,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Origen was born in A.D. 185-6; in 23 Alexandria of Christian parents. The supreme being, according to him is the Neoplatonic One beyond being but knowable by man if he free himself from matter. The Father is the fount and origin of all being, and is pure Spirit. The Son is begotten of the Father by an eternal act of will. He is the first born of all creation. Origen holds that the Son or Logos is essentially God, of the Substance and Nature of the Father, but sometimes he suggests that the Logos "possesses Godhead, but is not God." Rational Souls are outside the Godhead, though they are also spiritual creatures, made in God's own image. They are limited in Number and endowed with free will. Some of them remained in their original condition, but others fell away from God. These souls need bodies and different orders of beings with different kinds of bodies arose. This is allied to the Gnostic view that heavenly spirits fall from their immaterial bliss into the bondage of matter or into the form of demons. He admits that souls maybe reincarnated as animals and accepts the pre-existence & the future rebirth of Souls. "Every Soul has existed from the beginning, it has passed through some worlds already, and will pass through others before it reaches the final consummation. It comes into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life." The Kingdom of God is a spiritual reality, the Supersensuous and intelligible world. The historical facts of Christian revelation are treated by him as symbols of higher immaterial realities. Jerome comments as follows on his views regarding the ascent of Souls —
"And after a very long discussion, in which he asserts that all bodily Nature must be

B. changed into spiritual bodies of extreme fineness and that the whole of the matter must be transformed into a single body of the utmost purity, clearer than all brightness and of such a quality as the human mind cannot conceive, at the close he states: And God shall be all in all, so that the whole of bodily nature may be resolved into that substance which is superior to all others, namely, into the divine nature than which nothing can be better."

Christ is for Origen, more a teacher than a redeemer. Jesus also possessed a soul like any other, but He retained his innocence and lived by free choice in close association with the word of God, and by force of habit an indissoluble union was created. "This soul took flesh of the Virgin Mary and appeared among men. Origen advocated prayer in the name of Jesus but & rejected direct address to Jesus. He distinguishes two kinds of life, active and contemplative, and prefers the latter. He employs the distinction between a mystery religion for the educated and a mythical religion for the vulgar, and justifies it by appealing to the example of "the Persians and the "Indians."

There is no doubt that- though Origen sincerely believed that he was expounding the Christian faith, "he ended in speculations which were only remotely connected with it. The real source of these speculations is to be found in the intellectual atmosphere of the time, in which the ideas of Platonists, Stoics and Orientals were mingled." "The theology

G. W. Butterworth - Origen on First Principles". 1936. P. 30.

of Origen bears the same relation to the ~~Old~~ New Testament as that of Philo to the Old. What is here presented as Christianity is in fact the idealistic religious philosophy, attested by divine revelation, made accessible to all by the incarnation of the Logos, and purified from any connection with Greek mythology" - (Harnack - History of Dogma - E.T. Vol. II. (1896) pp 5-6.).

This tradition of the liberal Alexandrian School of. Clement and Origen is continued by the three Cappadocians, Basil of Caesarea, and the two Gregorys. For Basil, the Kingdom of Heaven is the contemplation of realities. The Cappadocians are unanimous in asserting the mystery of the divine being. "we know that He exists but of his essence we cannot deny that we are ignorant." The Apostrophe to God by St. Gregory of Nazianzen is thoroughly Neo Platonic; "the end of all art Thou, being One and All and None, being one Thou art not all, being all, Thou art not One; all names are Thine, how then shall I invoke Thy name Alone, Nameless?"

Quoted in Christopher Dawson — "Progress & Religion": 91.

Augustine (born in Tagaste in Roman Africa in A.D. 354 and died at Hippo in 430. He was Bishop of Hippo from 395 – 430.) Stands at the meeting place of two worlds, "the passing of that great order which had controlled the fortunes of the world for five centuries or more, and the laying of the foundations of the new world." He tried to lead his world from the old to the new. He says — "with me it stands fast never to depart from Christian doctrine authority, for I find no stronger. But as for those matters

.5 which it is possible to seek out by subtle reasoning, I am confident I shall find among the Neo Platonists that which does not conflict with our religion." Philosophy for Augustine ~~was~~ meant knowledge of God and his own soul. All action depends on knowledge, and scepticism cannot be the basis of conduct. There are truths which cannot be doubted. "It is sufficient for my purpose that Plato felt there were two worlds: the one intelligible where Truth itself dwelt; the other sensible, which, as is clear, we feel by sight and touch." (Contra Academicos III 17. 37). In the former sphere Truth encounters itself and God. The existence of the soul is established in the style of Śaṅkara or Descartes.

"Everyone who knows himself to be in doubt, knows truth and is certain about what actually he knows; therefore he is certain about truth. Everyone, therefore, who doubts whether there be truth has within himself truth whereby he should not doubt; nor is there anything true which is not true by truth. He therefore that can doubt in anywise should not doubt of truth. Where this is seen, there there is light, pure of all space, be in places or times, pure too, of representation of such a space." (De Vera Religione XXXIX. 73).

There is a higher reality to which the human mind is subject, Truth, which changes not — God. For Augustine

16. truth is God. "The happy life consists of joy in truth for this is a joying in Thee, who art the Truth, and God, health of my countenance, my God." (Confessions. x 23. 33). The mind of man finds itself in touch with an intelligible world and knows truth. The sensible cannot give birth to the intelligible which is unchanging, therefore this intelligible world is not a product of the senses or the soul of man. Truth is steady whereas the souls' glance is unsteady. Truth is found, not made, and the human mind is subject to it.

Augustine is not very clear about the nature of the Soul. It is not truth itself or a part of truth, because Truth is immutable and the Soul is ~~to~~ subject to change. The Soul is aware of itself as alive and thinking and therefore as a substance God sustains it and unites it with Himself in such a way that it perseveres in existence and participates in His thought. As a spiritual being the soul is indivisible. It is in the inward ~~guide~~ Self that we find God.

"I entered into my inward self, Thou being my guide, and beheld with the eye of my soul above my mind the light unchangeable. Thee (my God) wherein I first knew Thee, Thou liftedst me up that I might see There was what I might see,

and that I was not yet such as to see.
17 And Thou didst beat back the weakness
of my sight streaming forth Thy beams
of light upon me most strongly, and I
trembled with love and awe and I
perceived myself to be far off from Thee
in the region of unlikeness. Thou criedst
to me from afar, "Yea, verily I am truth
that I am". And I heard as the heart
heareth, nor had I room to doubt
and I should sooner doubt that I live
than that truth is not." (Confessions VII 16.23)

Augustine's classic words, "Thou hast
made us for Thyself, and our heart is
restless ~~until~~ until it rests in Thee",
represent the essence of the religious spirit.
Augustine's descriptions of the highest
moments of religious experience are in
the Style of Plotinus. Augustine is the
Christian Plotinus, and there is a good
deal in common between them in the
sphere of psychology.

The Soul can find God by withdrawing
from all things and senses. It is united
in the profoundest depths of the heart
with the supreme who dwells there. While
Plotinus regarded the mystic union with
the Absolute as union with the One beyond
Thou, Augustine holds that the word

is likely the Absolute.

16 Augustine distinguishes between ~~Scien~~ Science which is the work of the lower reason, and wisdom, which is the work of the higher reason, directed towards the repose of contemplation. By means of knowledge we cannot know what God is. "we can know what God is not, but not what he is." When we have the vision we are transformed. "we glow inwardly with Thy fire." Augustine's explanation of the Trinity is hardly intelligible. His prayers are to God through Christ, but not to Christ himself.

Replying to the comments of the Manichaean Faustus on the lives of the Hebrew patriarchs and judges, Augustine says that their cruelties must have been done in obedience to divine commands and the great Author of moral laws is not himself subject to them. He can at His pleasure act in ways opposed to His own legislation. Augustine was penetrated by the sense of man's utter impotence to rise of himself, and of his need of divine condescension. Man is divided from God not by external barriers but by a depraved will. Sin is the shadow cast by the light of God.

Yet in the central features of his system, Augustine remained a neo Platonist. He observes, "That

which is called the Christian religion
19. existed among the ancients and never
did not exist from the beginning of the
human race ~~till~~ until Christ came in
the flesh, at which time the true
religion which already existed began to
be called Christianity." (Epis Retrac. bk 1. xiii 3)
This breadth of view is hardly consistent
with his conduct as bishop when he
maintained the right of the Church
to persecute heretics. This greatest of the
Church Fathers was a Neoplatonist by
conviction and the Christian faith was
subordinate in his consciousness to the
truth of Neoplatonism. Professor F. Heiler
says, "In this peculiar fusion of the two
opposed types of religion, Neo Platonic
mysticism has the precedence. The goal
of all prayer for Augustine is the
return to the infinite one, the essential
unity with the highest good." He quotes
with approval the observation of Scheel:
"Neither in the thought nor in the
feeling of Augustine is the first place
assigned to specifically Christian ideas.
The genuine Augustine is the Neoplatonic
Augustine." (Heiler, Prayer. E.T. (1932). PP. 126-7)

The writings of Augustine which
incorporated the main doctrines of
Neo Platonism exercised the greatest

influence on the medieval mind even when the authority of Aristotle was at its strongest. Thomas Aquinas denies knowledge of what God is. He states definitely that "the Divine Substance ... by its immensity exceeds every formal principle to which our intelligence can reach and so we cannot apprehend it by knowing what it is, but we may get a sort of knowledge of it by knowing what it is not." (Summa Contra Gentiles, bk 1. chap. xiv.) The Thomists postulate a "gift of higher knowledge," to account for the love which is the most distinctive feature of mystical experience.

Boethius (A.D. 480-524) in his De Consolatione Philosophiae, made considerable use of Neoplatonic principles (Vol. 1. p358) Harnack in his "History of Dogma" says "Boethius in his mode of thought was certainly a Neoplatonist." Boethius' famous definition of eternal life as the simultaneous and perfect possession of boundless life expresses the spirit of Plotinus's description of eternity. In this "Enneads, V. 1. 4," he says Plotinus says "Nous possesses in itself all things abiding in the same place. It is, ever is and nowhere becomes, nor is ever past, for here nothing passes away but all things are eternally present."

21. Boethius views on the scale of reality, the primacy of the intelligible and ideal world, the identity of the Good and the One, the deification of the Soul by her participation of God, are Neoplatonic.

Dionysius the Areopagite is said to be the father of Christian Mysticism. He is undoubtedly a Christian Neoplatonist who was familiar with the writings of Proclus, Ignatius and Clement. He says "to me it seems right to speak without words and understand without knowledge; this I apprehend to be nothing but the mysterious silence and the mystical quiet which destroys consciousness and dissolves forms. Seek therefore silently and mystically, that perfect, primitive union with the Archgood." Commenting on this system, Dr Inge writes, "It is the ancient religion of the Brahmins masquerading in clothes borrowed from Jewish ~~allegorists~~ allegorist, half Christian Gnostics, Manichaeans, ~~platonising~~ platonising Christians, and pagan Neoplatonists". (Christian Mysticism (1899) pp 103-104).

In the "Theologia Mystica" and other works ascribed to him he develops the doctrines of Pla Proclus. For him God is the absolute No-thing which is above all existence. He speaks of the Superluscent darkness of silence and of the necessity to leave behind the

22. senses and the intellectual operations and all things known by senses and intellect.

We must tear aside "the veil of sensible things" for "the pre eminent cause of every object of sensible ~~perception~~ perception is "" none of the objects of sensible perception. The seal " is neither soul nor mind; nor has imagination nor opinion", nor reason nor conception, neither is expressed nor conceived; neither is number nor order; nor greatness nor littleness;---- When making the predications and abstractions of things after it, we neither predicate nor abstract from it since the all perfect and uniform cause of all is both above every definition, and the pre-eminence of him who is absolutely freed from all and beyond the whole, is also above every abstraction": we must deny everything about God in order to penetrate into the sublime & nosance, 'divine gloom', which is in verity Sovereign Knowledge. "Thus delivered from the sensible world and the intellectual alike, the soul enters into the mysterious obscurity of a holy ignorance and, renouncing all the gifts of Science, loses itself in Him who can be neither seen nor seized". (I.3) Dionysius distinguishes between the Supreme in itself and the Supreme in relation to creatures.

23 While the former is the godhead in its utter transcendence of all created being and its categories, the latter is His manifestation to man in terms of the highest categories of human experience. "Mystical Theology" is concerned with God as He is; "Divine Names", with His partial manifestations in terms of human experience. God is "undivided in things divided, unified in Himself, both unmingled and unmultiplied in the many. Dionysius is vague about ~~evil~~ the nature of evil.

Neoplatonism was absorbed by ~~Greek~~ Christianity through the writings of Dionysius. They became according to Baron Von Hugel, "the great treasure house from which the mystics and also largely the Scholastics throughout the Middle Ages, drew much of their literary material."

For The defeat of the Arab armies by Charles Martel in A.D. 732, decided the great question, whether Christian civilization should continue or Islam prevail in Europe. When Alexandria came to an end in A.D. 642, the Arabs kept up the cultural traditions in schools at Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova. The Muslim rulers of Baghdad had

as early as the eighth century, encouraged the
24. translations of Greek thinkers; Plato,
Aristotle and Plotinus, into Arabic.
Arab travellers were attracted by Indian
civilization. Alberuni accompanied
Mahomud of Ghazni to India and acquired
a knowledge of Indian religions classics.
Many works, religions and Secular, were
translated from Sanskrit into Arabic
and from Arabic into Latin. Towards the
end of the twelfth century western Europe
acquired the complete body of Aristotle's
logical writings in Latin translations made
in Spain from the Arabic texts along with
the commentaries of Arabian and Jewish
philosophers. The theism of Aristotle was used
as a preparation for the Christian faith.
Philosophy became subservient to Orthodoxy.
Thomas Aquinas spoke largely from
Dionysius. Dante's conception of the
beatific vision is identical with that
of the intelligible world as figured by
Plotinus. He uses the conception of
emanation by which the higher cause
remains in itself, while producing that
which is next to it in order of being.
By means of this ideal, Dante justifies
and explains the varying degrees of
perfection in created things.

There are great similarities

between Hindu, Persian and Christian
25. forms of mysticism which may be
accounted for as products of similar
evolution: The Sufis combine Mohamed's
prophetic faith in God with the wisdom
of the Vedanta and the spiritual
discipline of the Yoga. Though the
background of ~~Dara~~ Islam is the
Mediterranean ~~civilization~~ culture from
which the roots of western civilization
derive, and it grew up under the
influence of Hellenism & interpreted
Hellenism to the medieval world, Christianity
dismissed the followers of Islam as infidels
& the later exchanges between East and
West were for many centuries confined
to exchanges on the battlefield between
the forces of Christianity and those of
Islam.

John Scotus Erigena (Ninth century)
may be regarded as the most profound
philosopher of the Middle Ages. Though
an Irishman, he belongs in thought
to Eastern Christianity. His great
work "De Divisione Naturae" was
condemned in 1225 by Pope Honorius IV
to be burned. In this work he classifies
nature, or what we call Reality into
four Kinds: 1 That which creates &

is not created; (2) that which creates and is
26. Created; (3) that which is created & does not
Create; (4) that which neither creates nor is
Created. These are not four different
things or classes, but four aspects or stages
of the one world process. Creation is an
eternal projection of the ideal order
eternally present in ~~reflection of the divine~~
God - All existence is a theophany. The
Soul of man is the reflection of the divine.
Erigena revives Origen's universalism
and regards the Fall as pre cosmic.

Erigena was considered a heretic & he
left no disciples. Peter Abelard was
the most renowned dialectician of the
12th Century, & he attributes to Plato
the anticipation of the Christian doctrine
of the Trinity. Abelard tried to reconcile
Christianity & Platonism.

In the abbey of St. Victor, Hugo and
Richard developed the mystical side of
the teaching of St. Augustine. "The way to
ascend to God" says Hugo of St. Victor,
"is to descend into oneself." "The ascent
is through Self above Self" says Richard
of St. Victor. He continues, "Let him
that thirsts to see God, clean his
mirror, let him make his own spirit
bright." They believe in ecstatic
contemplation as the way to the

realization of truth.

27. The Neoplatonic tradition is continued by St. Bonaventure. The highest mystical apprehension of God is described in the Spirit of Plotinus, though it is to be the ... of gift of God's grace and beyond ... man's natural power to obtain.

Albertus Magnus another great mystic of the age followed the Dionysian tradition. For him union with God is the aim of life. If we divest the mind of all that is sensible, outward and phenomenal, it rises through the pure intellect to union with divinity - "This great schoolman, who is the master of St. Thomas Aquinas, teaches doctrines "characteristically Indian" (Kennedy. "The Gospels of the Infancy").

"From what source came this philosophy which Albertus shared with the Sentences? He got it through the medium of the Arabic; but it is not the intuition or ecstasy of Plotinus. I cannot say whether it is to be found in any of the later Neoplatonists or in the independent speculations of Arabian Metaphysicians; but the ideas are distinctly Indian and must have come from India to the West" - (Kennedy).

St. Thomas Aquinas (1227-74). was a pupil of Albertus Magnus.

In the last year of his life he experienced 53.
28. a prolonged ecstasy and refused thereafter
to write anything, despite the entreaties of his
secretary, Reginald. Robert Bridges describes
this incident in "The Testament of Beauty" (1930).

_ _ _ _ _ "and sighing he reply'd ... "
"I will tell thee a secret, my son, constraining thee
lest thou dare impart it to any man whiles I
live.
Thy writing is at end. I have seen such things.
revealed
That what I have written and taught seemeth
to me of small worth.
And hence I hope in my God, that, as of
doctrine
then will be speedily also an end of Life!"...

The mystic tradition is continued by the
great German mystics Eckhart and
Tauler, the Spanish St Theresa and St.
John of the Cross, and the English
Platonists and numbers of others.

The line of the East has not been
any spiritual or human appeal, but
desire for gold and her company as a
consumer. Columbus searching for India,
inadvertently discovered America. India
has been the prize for competing imperial-
isms. The Portugese, and the Spaniards,
the Dutch, the French, and the English
fought with one another for the
possession of India, and the conflict
ended in 1761 with the decisive victory

of England. The scientific study of Indian
29. literature starts from this period.. In 1785
Charles Wilkins published an English
translation of the Bhagavadgītā to which
Warren Hastings wrote a preface in which
he said that- works like the Bhagavadgītā
"will survive when the British dominion
in India shall have long ceased to
exist and when the sources which it
once yielded of wealth and power are
lost to remembrance." William Jones
published in 1789 his English version of
Kālidāsa's "Śakuntalā." This was translated
from English into German by Georg
Förster and was welcomed by men like
Herder and Goethe. Though Englishmen
were naturally the first to make Europe
acquainted with the spiritual treasures of
India, German scholars soon took
the lead. Heine says — "The Portuguese,
Dutch and English have been for a long
time, year after year, shipping home the
treasures of India in their big vessels.
the Germans, have all along been left to
watch it. To day Schlegel, Bopp, Humboldt
Frank etc, are our East Indian Sailors.
Bonn and Munich will be good factories".

5) Friedrich Schlegel's book — "The Language
and wisdom of the Indians" gave the lead
to Indological studies. August Wilhelm

Von Schlegel who became the first German
30. professor of Sanskrit in 1818, in Bonn
edited the Gītā in 1823. It made a great
impression on Wilhelm von Humboldt
who said — "this episode of the Mahā-
bhārata was the most beautiful, nay a
perhaps, the only true philosophical poem
which all the literatures known to us
can show."

Schopenhauer became acquainted
with the thought of the Upaniṣads through
a Latin translation from Persian by a
Frenchman, Anquetil Duperron. His eulogy
is well known — "And O! how the
mind is here washed clean of all its
early ingrafted Jewish superstition! It is
the most profitable and most elevated
reading which (the original text excepted) is
possible in the world. It has been the
solace of my life and will be the solace
of my death." Schopenhauer was greatly
influenced by Buddhist ideals. German
transcendentalism was affected by Indian
thought through Schopenhauer, Hartmann
and Nietzsche: Richard Wagner became
acquainted with Buddhistic ideals through
the writings of Schopenhauer. His
"Parsifal" arose out of a French
translation of a Buddhist legend. 10
Mathilde Wesendonck, Wagner wrote in

31. the year 1857: "You know how I have unconsciously become a Buddhist," and again, "Yes, child, it is a world view, compared with which, every other dogma must appear small and narrow." Brunhilde says in Wagner's "Twilight of the Gods"—

"Know ye whither I am going?
Out of the home of Desire I move away,
Home of Illusion I fly from forever:
The open gates of eternal becoming
Emancipated from re-birth. The knowing one
passes away."

Brandes claims that Heine, though a Semite had "his spiritual home on the banks of the Ganges." Buddhism became popular in Germany through Naumann's German translation of Buddhist texts. Paul Deussen's translations of the Upanishads and scholarly works on Indian philosophy became classics on the subject.

Michelet speaking about Ramayana wrote in 1864: "Whoever has done or willed too much, let him drink from this deep cup a long draught of life and youth.... Everything is narrow and dry in the West—Greece is small and I stifle: Judaea is dry and I pant. Let me look a little towards lofty Asia, the profound East." --- Comte's positivism is "but Buddhism adapted to modern

32 Civilization: it is philosophic Buddhism in a slight disguise." In his "Main currents of European Literature" vol 1. p. 126, Aoniel refers to the Hindu streak in him. He writes — "there is a great affinity in me with the Hindu genius — that mind, vast, imaginative, loving, dreamy and speculative, but destitute of ambition, personality and will. - - - - - what does it all matter? "It is perhaps not a bad thing; that in the midst of the devouring activities of the western world, there should be a few Brahmanical Souls". (p. 269).

Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" aroused much enthusiasm in England and America. In America, Thoreau, Emerson and Walt Whitman show the influence of Indian thought. Thoreau says "The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges". Emerson's Oversoul is the paramatman of the Upanisads. Whitman turns to the East in his anxiety to escape from the complexities of civilization and the bewilderments of a baffled intellectualism. Irving Babitt and the The humanism of Paul Elmer More show the deep writings of influence of Indian thought.

Maeterlinck Maeterlinck speaks of the "western" and "Eastern" lobes of the human brain and says that "the one here produces reason, science, consciousness, and the other secretes intuition, religion the subconscious ---- we owe to the western lobe extraordinary

33. progress in all material sciences, but also Catastrophes, such as those we are undergoing today. . . . It is time to awaken the Eastern Lobe.

Romain Rolland who has been deeply influenced by Indian thought, writes:—
"There are a certain number of us in Europe for whom the civilization of Europe is no longer enough."

Keyserling whose writings breathe the Spirit of the East tells us —
"Europe no longer makes me react. This world is too familiar to me to give new shapes to my being: it is too limited. The whole of Europe nowadays is of one mind only. I wish to escape to spaces where my life must needs be transformed if it is to survive".

The Irish Literary Renaissance with its central figures of W. B. Yeats, & George W. Russell (AE) is moulded by Eastern conceptions. AE writes — "Goethe, Wordsworth Emerson and Thoreau among moderns have Something of this vitality and wisdom, but we can find all they have said and much more in the grand sacred books of the East. The Bhagavadgita and Upanisads contain such god like fulness of wisdom on all things, that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strive for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things

which the soul feels to be sure." (A Memoir of Æ by John Eglinton (1937) p. 20.).

There are many literary men today who are influenced by Indian thought and look to it for inspiration in our present troubles.... Mr Fausset in his book, "A Modern Prelude", tells how he has travelled from orthodox Christianity to find in "the inspired pantheism in which the vision and teaching of the Vedanta culminated," what could at least purge & content his unquiet Self. (p. 256). Aldous Huxley in his "Eyeless in Gaza" and "Ends and Means" invites our attention to the discipline essential for spiritual insight and argues for the acceptance of the Yoga method. The influence of Indian thought is not so much a model to be copied as a dye which permeates."

Sir Charles Eliot observes: "Let me confess that I cannot share the confidence in the superiority of Europeans and their ways which is prevalent in the West. European Civilization is not satisfying and Asia can still offer something more attractive to many who are far from Asiatic in spirit." (Hinduism & Buddhism. Vol. 1. P. XC VI. (1921).

There are some people however in the West however who are attracted by the glamour of the exotic, and who feel like Kipling when in his poem "Mandalay" he writes:—

"Slip me somewhere east of Suez where the best is like the worst,
Where there ain't no Ten Commandments, and a man can raise a thirst.
For the temple bells are ringing, and it's there that I would be.

35 By the old Phoulmeian pagoda, looking lazy at the Sea."

"The East has ever been a romantic puzzle to the west, the home of adventures like those of the "Arabian Nights," the abode of magic, the land of hearts desire, one to which even men of waning faith may turn for confirmation in the hope that after all the Spiritual counts. Madame Alice Louis-Barthou writes — "I look upon the Occident with abomination.— - - - The Orient is calm, peace, beauty, colour, mystery, charm, sunlight, joy, ease of life and Revery; in fine the exact opposite of our hateful & grotesque civilization. If I had my way I should have a Chinese wall built between the Orient and the Occident to keep the latter from poisoning the former: I should have the heads of all the giaours cut off and I should go and live where you can see clearly and where there are no Europeans". Theosophical and Anthroposophical cults which employ largely Hindu & Buddhist Concepts & practices, Neo-Buddhist and Rāmakrsna Societies attract a considerable proportion of religious men in the west. There are some who are obviously uneasy about the Spread of Eastern culture in the west. (Henri Massis, perturbed by this, wrote a work on "The Defence of the west" (E.T. 1927). See also Wendell Thomas, "Hinduism invades America".

VII

Greece, Palestine and India.

Is the spiritual waywardness of the West motived by a deep instinct for self-preservation and a longing for world unity? Thinking men are aware that in spite of the brilliant and historic achievements of the West, there is something wrong. Life is becoming increasingly unstable. The affirmation of the Sovereign State owing allegiance to none and free to destroy its fellows, ~~is~~ likely open to a similar fate without appeal; racial and National idolatories, the growing tyranny of wealth, the conflict between rich and poor, and the destruction of the co-operative spirit threaten the very existence of society. Insecurity of Nations and destitution of peoples together with periodic bloody revolutions, are different sides of a social order which is really primitive in character. Greek culture was born in strife - The Roman Empire was formed by a series of destructive and often savage wars. The period of the Middle Ages when Europe had the formal unity of a common religion, was a period of incessant war. Even now we have the struggle within for justice and better conditions of life and without for independence. Man has not grown worse. When Mrs Rosita Forbes visited the penitentiary at São Paulo she asked if there were any thieves among the inmates - The warden was shocked - "Oh, no," he replied, "Brazilians are very honest.

Nearly all these men are murderers." Augustine quotes with approval the reply of the pirate to Alexander the Great. "Because I do it with a little ship, I am called a robber, and you, because you do it with a great fleet, are called an emperor." The final test of every social system is the happiness and well being of men and women. The chaotic state of the world today when evil is rampant and good is trampled underfoot, is a challenge to our faith and our principles.

It is an historical fact that civilizations based on truly religious forces such as endurance, suffering, passive resistance, understanding, tolerance, are long lived, while those which take their stand on humanist elements like active-reason, power, aggression, progress, make for a brilliant display but are short lived. Compare the relatively long record of China and of India with the eight hundred years or less of the Greeks, the nine hundred years of the Romans, and the thousand years of Byzantium. Greek civilization passed away because the Greeks could not combine even among themselves because of their loyalty to the city states. The structure of the Roman Empire had ceased to exist by A.D. 500. Some scholars of the Renaissance attribute the fall of Rome to the Spread of the "superstition" of Christianity, thus echoing the cry of the Chronicler of the pagan reaction under Julian, the Apostate, the Christians to whom we owe all our misfortunes. - - - - - - - . There were many

reasons for the fall of Rome. Treason from within, quite as much as danger from without. Mr Stanley Casson writes, " The barbarian intrusions were more the consequence than the cause of her sickness. What had happened was that standards had fallen. ---- In the letters of Sidonius we hear of censorships, of political murder disguised as accident, of bribery and corruption in high places, and even of the persecution of the Jews. "(Progress & Catastrophe (1937) p. 203). "The whole world groaned at the fall of Rome" said Augustine. "The human race is included in the ruin; my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth and sobs choke my words to think that the city is a captive which led captive the whole world;" wrote St. Jerome from his monastery in Bethlehem. To Christian and pagan alike it seemed that the impossible, the unthinkable had happened. Rome, the dispenser of destiny, the eternal city whose dominion was to have lasted forever, fell.

The Empire was broken up into two parts, the western with Rome for its capital and the Eastern with Constantinople. By the end of the 5th century the Ostrogoths had captured the whole of western and North western Europe. The Franks overran Gaul and a large part of what is now Germany. The Vandals had conquered North africa and the Visigoths had subdued Spain. The Eastern Empire was called the Byzantine because its Capital, Constantinople founded by Constantine, stood on the site of the ancient Byzantium. From its seven hills it commanded the approaches to both Europe and Asia. Its narrow straits joined East and West.

Theodosius built the great fortress and Justinian rebuilt its institutions. Nevertheless there was always the fear of attack by barbaric hordes and there were actually attacks by the Persians and the Arabs in A.D. 616, 675, 717; by the Bulgarians in A.D. 813, by the Russians in A.D. 866, 904, 936, 1043. Philosophy failed and literature languished and religion became rigid and superstitious. Before Byzantium fell to the Turks in A.D. 1453, she had succeeded in spreading in the western world the light of civilization and culture derived from Greece and Rome. And modern civilization, which took its rise after the fall of Byzantium seems to have worked itself out, for it is exhibiting today all the features which are strangely similar to the symptoms which accompany the fall of civilizations. Instead of progress in charity we have increase in hostilities. In order to live we seem to have lost the reason for living.

The Chinese and Hindu civilizations are not great in the high qualities that have made the youthful nations of the west the dynamic force they have been on the arena of world history, the qualities of ambition and adventure, of nobility and courage, of public spirit and social enthusiasm. But they have lived long, faced many crises, and preserved their identity. India for example has endured centuries of war and invasion, pestilence and human misrule. Perhaps one needs a good deal of suffering and sorrow to learn a little understanding

and tolerance. On the whole, the Eastern Civilizations are interested not so much in improving the actual conditions, as in making the best of this imperfect world, in developing the qualities of cheerfulness and contentment, patience and endurance. They are not happy in the prospect of combat. To desire little, to quench the eternal fires has been their aim. "To be gentle is to be invincible." (Lao Tze). Because the Eastern people aim at existence simplified and self sufficient, and beyond the reach of fate, if they wish to develop gentle manners which are inconsistent with inveterate habits, we need not look on them as tepid, anaemic folk, who are eager to retreat into darkness. The western races crave for freedom even at the price of conflict, while the Eastern cling to peace even at the price of subjection. A spiritual attitude to life has nurtured the Eastern cultures and given them an unfailing trust in life and a robust common sense in looking at its myriad changes.

The Eastern civilizations are by no means self sufficient. They seem today to be chaotic, helpless and incapable of pulling themselves together and forging ahead. Their peoples are wandering in their own lands lost and half alive, with an old fashioned faith in the triumph of right over might. What they have gained in insight they seem to have lost in power. They require to be rejuvenated.

East and West are both moving out of their historical past towards a way of thinking which shall eventually be shared in common by all mankind even as the material appliances are. We need today a proper

reorientation, literally the values of the world derived from the Orient, the truths of inner life. They are as essential for human happiness as outer organization. The fate of the human race hangs on a rapid assimilation of the qualities associated with the mystic religions of the East.

Today the whole world is in fusion and all is in motion. East and west are fertilizing each other, not for the first time. May we not strive for a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic religion, a philosophy profounder & more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual & ethical force, which will conquer the hearts of men and compel peoples to acknowledge its sway?

II

We may well ask whether western civilization is not also based on religious values. It will be useful if we consider the exact nature of the religious life of the west and the extent of its influence on western civilization. It may be said that there are three currents which frequently cross and re-cross, which can be traced in the western religious tradition. They are the Graeco Roman, the Hebrew, and the Indian.

Graeco Roman has for its chief elements, rationalism, humanism, and the Sovereignty of the State. The spirit of speculation which questioned religious ideas, and sought to follow truth regardless of the discomfort it might cause

7

ha, started with the Greeks. Xenophanes fought hard to emancipate his people from superstition and lies. Democritus found the self-existent in the atom, and Heraclitus in fire. For Protagoras man is the measure of all things, ... And as for God, he cannot be found even if he exists. For Critias, "nothing is certain except that birth leads to death and that life cannot escape ruin". According to Georgias every man was free to fix his own standard of truth. Unless Plato is wholly unfair, certain of the Sophists were prepared to justify philosophically the doctrine that might is right. Socrates was suspected & accused of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens. Doubts run through the poetry of Euripides, the rationalism of the Stoics, the Schools of the Sceptics, and of the materialism of the Epicureans. Faith in Gods could not last when Gods were being made before men's eyes. The Ptolemies of Alexandria were freely spoken of as Gods. Julius Caesar received divine honours even in his lifetime & the day after his death the Senate decreed that he should be treated as a god. All this confirmed the Scepticism of Euhemerus that the Gods were only great men deified.

Though classical Rome was far less speculative than Greece, it produced one of the greatest sceptics of antiquity — Lucretius. He attacked religion & hurled defiance and contempt at it. In the early days of the Roman Empire, even such an

austere Stoic as Marcus Aurelius looked upon the Christian religion with fear and contempt. In the 13th century Frederick II is said to have declared that the world had been deceived by three impostors, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. Roger Bacon was a definitely Sceptical thinker. Machiavelli in his "Prince" revived the old conception that religion is an instrument for keeping the people in subjection. He did not disguise his intense dislike for Christianity. Rabelais (1690) was impatient with asceticism & conventional religion. Friar Bacon was imprisoned as a Sorcerer because he dabbled in Science. The Scientific movement of the 16th & 17th Centuries with such names as those of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Harvey and Newton, discouraged the supernatural explanations of natural phenomena & led to the conception of the universe as a great machine working by rigidly determined laws of causation. The thrill of new discoveries & mental activities raised great expectations - Men seemed to become the lords of creation though not the heirs of heaven. While some of the leading representatives of the scientific movement ~~were not anti~~ like Descartes, Bayle, Bacon and Newton were not anti religious, the movement as a whole encouraged free thinking. The religious conflicts which followed the Reformation split the Church up into a number of Sects and disputes. Montaigne (1533-92) was nominally a Catholic but was really an Agnostic. He says - "Death is no concern

of yours either dead or alive; alive because you still are; dead because you are no longer." Leonardo da Vinci rejected every dogma that could not be tested and was a complete sceptic. And so we trace the strain of scepticism from ~~Hobbes~~ Hobbes who scorned supernaturalism and revealed religion to Voltaire and Rousseau, Leibniz and Kant who says there can be no theoretical demonstration of the existence of God, though we need Him for practical life. Herr Rosenberg in his book on "The Myth of the Twentieth Century" (1930) makes it clear he has no faith in the transcendent God of the theist: His deity is the human spirit and racial society, the Nordic race. Even Christian thinkers tried to reinterpret Christianity. The works of Strauss and Renan, Karl Marx and Nietzsche and the scientific doctrines of evolution made atheism popular. Scepticism takes many forms, modernism in religion, scientific humanism or naturalism.

III

The second current in Western religions life is the Jewish one. The great prophets were are Israel's abiding glory and their essential contribution to humanity is an ardent monotheism, the conception of the Supreme as a concrete living God whose thoughts and ways are not man's thoughts and ways. The Jews believed not in a metaphysical

attributes absolute but in a personal God [17].
eternally acting and ceaselessly interested in
His creatures, bound up with their own history.
The spirit of the West with its emphasis on reason
and exaltation of the State got confused with the
Jewish elements and prevailed over the non-
dogmatic and universal sides of the Christian
faith which started as a revolt against the
tribal and the intellectualist conceptions
of the Supreme. Christianity appealed to a
weary and heavy laden people at a time
when the political fortunes of Europe were down.
It came with healing in its wings for
souls mortally afraid of life. It caught
Europe in a mood of depression and world-
weariness and so its message that the Sun
Still Shone in heaven, though on earth it was
eclipsed, found a ~~best~~ wide welcome.
But the whole Spirit of Christianity is foreign
to the temper of Europe and though it has
been the religion of Europe all these centuries,
it has not yet been perfectly assimilated by it.
The victory of Christianity over the life of the
West has always been a remote vision &
the history of the Christian Church is the
record of the gradual adaptation of an Eastern
religion to the Western spirit. It is not the
pale Galilean that has conquered, but the
Spirit of the West.

Jesus abhorred dogma and never encouraged
the metaphysical and theological complications
which are responsible for a good deal of
casuistry, intolerance, and obscurantism.
His chief opponents were the High Priests

and the Pharisees who insisted on salvation by orthodoxy alone. But we find today in both the Catholic and Protestant forms, Christianity has become a religion of authority, finding its seat in a tradition believed to be supernaturally imparted. Though Jesus paid little attention to organization, elaborate ecclesiastical structures have emerged from his teaching. The teaching of Jesus had for its aim the making of spiritual souls who are above the battle of creeds and of Nations, but it is used to make loyal members of the Church. Religion is treated as a means for securing worldly peace & prosperity in this life & escaping hell & winning heaven in the next. It is often a national institution allied with political causes. It is employed to sanctify human passions - The garb of religion is the unseen enemy of true religion and is therefore more subtle and dangerous.

Thus by a series of basic formations a Contemplative religion becomes a dogmatic Secular one - When Rome entered into the inheritance of Alexander & established her empire, she did not interfere with their religious beliefs so long as they did not clash with the administration of the State. There was no worship common to the whole State except that of the Emperor. In course of time Christianity - which had all the qualities of a mystery religion was accepted by the people. The Church based its foundation to a God-Man and its officers claimed to derive their authority through appointment by the

founder who gathered a small group for that specific purpose. The Church was a strict
12 corporation, a secret society like that for the celebration of the mysteries called Ecclesia, with its own ~~initiation~~ initiation ceremonies, rites of sacrifice (the Eucharist) baptism, the laying on of hands and confession. All over the Empire a number of small organizations grew up, each called a church, presided over by an Episkopos or bishop. The Church as a whole included them all. Soon the Ecclesia developed a body of writings which it preserved for the instruction of its members and the continuity of doctrine. When Controversies developed it was found necessary to sift these doctrines, and so the Canon of the New Testament emerged. This included the four Gospels, a few letters written by the missionaries of the early Church, called Epistles, one record of the early Apostolic action called the Acts of the Apostles, and one work of prophetic vision known as the Apocalypse.

When the Church became a State within the State it came into conflict with the civil power. This difficulty disappeared with the conversion of Constantine, but a theological crisis arose. Arius explained the Logos in a way which provoked great opposition. He held that the Word was maker of Creation & was therefore more than man, and as the creator of all other things he could rightly be called God. The Arian Controversy split the Church and into warring factions. Unity was the essence of the

matter and dissent was not tolerated. 25

13. Athanasius opposed the idea of the created Logos and admitted that Jesus was God by nature. Faith in God-man was for him the essence of the Christian religion. The strife between Arius and Athanasius still continues in the hearts of men. Athanasius weaned the Church from her traditions of tolerance and scholarship, of Clement and Origen. Nicene orthodoxy gained victory over Hellenistic & heretical systems. Learning was lost & with it the capacity for speculation. In proselytizing the pagans Christianity absorbed many of the pagan beliefs and practices and obscured the simplicity and rationality of the faith of Jesus. In its anxiety to spread it used the language of every-race and class and country: It seemed to be all things to all men. Tenney Frank in his "Aspects of Social Behaviour in Ancient Rome (p. 63) says — "Except with regard to its fundamental tenets, it adapted itself to the needs and customs of various nations. In the famine-stricken regions of Anatolia, its preachers promised a heaven with ever-bearing fruit trees; for the over-worked Serfs in Egypt it provided refuges in monasteries; to the Berber mountaineers of Africa it gave a holy cause for the crusading especially against rich and oppressive land-owners; to educated Romans like Marcius Felix and Lactantius, it permitted the reading of Cicero and Virgil; nor did it attempt to deprive the real Greeks of Homer and Plato."

In the Dark Ages which extended from the end of the fifth century to the establishment
14. of feudalism in the eleventh century, Europe
weltered in ignorance and misery and lived
in constant peril and pressure.

In the Middle Ages, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, faith was dominant and doubt was suppressed. Authority was supreme and the heretic was more the enemy than the infidel. The Church endeavoured by the Stake and thumbscrew to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints, and became alienated from the spirit of Jesus. This period saw the rise of the universities, parliaments and the Gothic Cathedrals, as well as the Crusades.

Philosophy in the Middle Ages was Scholasticism and the greatest of the School men was Thomas Acquinas. He attempted to reconcile philosophy with religion, Aristotelian wisdom with Catholic Orthodoxy. St. Thomas conceives reality as an ordered hierarchy of existence ranging from God, whose being is wholly from Himself, who is in no sense corporeal, and who is perfect actuality. God alone is pure being, pure Act; all other existents are individual but imperfect and owe their real but limited status to Him who alone truly is. In Him there is neither limitation nor contingency. He exists by His very essence. His being is the condition of our thinking. The existence of matter is wholly dependent on higher orders of being, its essence is pure corporeality, its natural mode is that of wholly undetermined potency. Each order of being has its own characteristic

functions and modes. We can argue from one to another only on the principle of analogy, not that of identity, and through this reasoning we can pass from sensible existence to the Source of all existence or pure being. Even though we cannot know God by the direct operations of reason, we are not altogether helpless, since analogy provides the means. If we would rise to the intelligible we must know the truth about the sensible universe which our minds are fully capable of fully apprehending. For this reason the entire Aristotelian system is taken over as a complete account of all that reason had hitherto been able to attain by the study of nature. It is only revelation which gives us the triune character of God.

5. Man is altogether different from God. On the principle of analogy it is asserted that his perfection is wholly distinct from that of the brutes or the angels. As a being composed of soul and body, man should not aim at either an animal or an angelic life. Contemplation of truth is the highest end of man & that requires bodily health, freedom from the disturbance of passions & achieved by moral virtues. The body is relevant to human perfection. It is by no means a fetter of the soul. He affirms that the beatific vision requires a beatified consciousness (lumen gloriae) which is distinct from ordinary consciousness (lumen naturale) and prophetic consciousness (lumen gratiae). Even then the divine essence will not be comprehended. On earth it is impossible for us to have a direct vision of God. A partial

knowledge of God by mental images (phantasmata) is all that can be had. If Moses and St Paul received the divine vision in their ecatasy it only shows that ecatasy is not impossible or contrary to nature. Dr Kirk says, "For lesser beings than Moses & St. Paul; such as St. Peter and David, he provides two ... kinds of ecatasy in which the contemplation of God is less remote from that which the ordinary class may hope to achieve in this life." (The Vision of God (1931) p. 392).

16

Scholasticism kept alive intellectual vigour. By its powers of definition & subtle inference and its intellectual energy, it nourished the roots of scientific culture. Copernicus is said to have conceived the hypothesis of the movement of the earth round the Sun as a mere inference from the doctrine of the Trinity. Towards the end of the Middle Ages we have an increasing knowledge of the world by science & discovery. Men were filled with vitality & the ~~love~~ spirit of adventure.

Signs of decline of faith became evident at the beginning of the fourteenth century and the authority of the Pope was contested. In the fifteenth & sixteenth centuries there was a regular reign of terror in the name of religion. The opposition expressed itself through the Reformation, & when Christendom became a house divided against itself. When Luther and other scholars rejected certain doctrines and opposed certain practices maintained by the Roman Church, they did so, taking their stand on the Scripture, especially the New Testament while the Catholic tradition gives us an infallible interpretation of an

infallible Book, the Protestant Churches
17 speak in an uncertain voice and give a hundred different answers.

Calvin erected a new Church with a well developed doctrine. The divine will is supreme. The sovereignty of God and the predestination of man were Calvin's chief doctrines. Calvinism provided the framework of the new Protestant movement which spread over Europe, almost for a time dominating England, and becoming the established system in Scotland.

In religion, hatred of Catholic and Protestant grew up. Wars of religion increased. The savageries of the Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the intrigues of religious teachers such as Luther, Calvin and Knox showed how religiously Christians could hate one another simply because they bore different labels.

Today Fundamentalism has arisen — New dogmatisms have come in to being which would rehabilitate the authority of gospel, Church or Creed & effectively quench the Spirit. We have in Karl Barth a crusader and a fundamentalist. For him humanism and modernism are heresies. He refuses to compromise with modern thought or to bring Christianity "up to date". "It is forced down my throat", he says, "that the Dogmatic theologian is under the obligation to 'justify' himself in his utterances before philosophy. To that my answer is likewise, No ----". For Barth it is a disservice to religion to try to illuminate it by arguments from philosophy. The proper duty of the theologian is to see how

for the proclamations of the Church are in conformity with Scripture - "Holy Scripture is the object of our study, and at the same time the criterion of our study of the Church's past." Barth declares that Christianity cannot lay claim to supernatural truth so long as it tries to compromise with humanism liberalism, psychology and philosophy of religion.

A welter of superstitions and taboos, primitive myths and unhistorical traditions, unscientific dogmatisms & national idolatries, constitutes the practising religion of the vast majority of mankind today.

III.

The mystic tradition has been a persistent one in the religious life of the west. Its origins as we have seen may be traced to India. Professor F. Heiler observes that — "the history of religion knows only three great independent currents of development, which may possibly go back to two - There runs an unbroken chain from the Atman - Brahman mysticism of the Vedic Upanisads to the Vedic Vedanta of Samkara on the one side and on the other through the mystical technique of the Yoga System to the Buddhist doctrine of Salvation." He distinguishes two types of religion, the mystic and the prophetic, or the Biblical and the evangelical. The former he traces to India, though he recognises that in Indian thought there is a theistic current, which refuses to blur the distinctiveness of individuals and looks upon God not only as immanent but transcendent & advocates prayer and appeal to the Infinite instead of quiet contemplation.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad and the
Bhagavadgītā, the theistic reformers
19. such as Ramanuja and Madhva,
and saints such as Tukārām, Tulsidas,
rest represent this tendency. Yet the other
tendency is the more prominent one and
Christian mysticism owes to it a good deal
of its development. It need not however
be assumed that the two are exclusive
of each other. As a matter of fact the
Upanisads do not look upon them as
irreconcilable. Dr Inge in his "Christian
Mysticism" refers to the mystic strain in
the early thinkers. He, however, agrees with
Heiler in looking upon the negative descriptions
of the deity & the world denying character &
ethics as Indian in origin. These are
pervasive characteristics of Christian
mysticism and show the decisive
influence of Indian thought on it. To give
a negative account of God is to deny affirm
His immensity of being. When personality is
denied to Him it is only in the interests
of super-personality. When we are asked
to recognize the ephemeral character of
earthly goods, it is to help us to live in
the light of the eternal values. This is the
lesson of the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgītā.

There is thus enough justification for
regarding the mystic element in the west
as Indian. In ~~different~~ different places
and times and under the shadow of every
religion, Mysticism has developed. In India
Mysticism this universality is openly
acknowledged and a philosophy of

religion is built on it. It affirms that the strain of mysticism is everywhere latent in humanity and only requires favouring conditions to reveal itself. Today when we are breaking away from incredible beliefs and unsocial traditions, mysticism has a deep appeal to the spiritual-minded.

Science cannot minister to the needs of the soul nor can dogmatism meet the needs of the intellect. Atheism and dogmatism, scepticism & blind faith are not the only alternatives. They are the twin fruits on the same branch, the positive and negative poles of the same tendency. We require a religion which is both scientific and humanistic. Religion, Science and humanism were sisters in ancient India; they were allies in Greece. They must combine today if they are to attract all those who are equally indifferent to organized religion and atheism, to super naturalism and nihilism. We need a spiritual home where we can live without surrendering the rights of reason or the needs of humanity.

Reverence for truth is a moral value. It is dearer than Buddha or Jesus. Truth is opposed, not to reason or the Greek spirit, but to dogma and fossilized tradition. We cannot rest the case of religion any more on dogmatic Super naturalism.

Mysticism takes its stand on verifiable truth and not on the correct solution of credal puzzles. The code of ethics

adopted by mysticism is noble and austere. It insists that suffering and renunciation are the life blood of religion. In the splendid phrase of Wilamowitz; we must give our blood to the ghosts of our ideals that they may drink and live. The world accepting suggestions of religions can be easily incorporated in our codes, but the stark element of world renunciation is supremely difficult & we are only too ready to make any shifts and adopt any expedients to eliminate it. Spinoza concludes his "Ethics" with the following passage:— "The wise man is scarcely at all perturbed in spirit, but being conscious of himself and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit. If the way, which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems seems exceedingly hard, it may, nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard since it is so seldom found. ----- All things excellent as as difficult as they are". Mysticism finds itself in conflict with all those tendencies which put authority above truths and nation above humanity. It looks upon them as a menace to spiritual life & civilization and by acquiescing in them we help what is evil to consolidate itself. So it protests often passionately and indignantly against abuses of organized religions. It revolts against institution — alism and stereotyped forms of

religious life. The mystics of all religions have at some point or other in their careers, protested against outside authority, credal bonds and spiritual dictatorships.

There is a great European tradition of mysticism which starts from the mystery religions of Greece and develops through Pythagoras and Plato, Alexandrian religious philosophy, Jesus, Paul and John, Clement and Origen, the Neoplatonists, the medieval Christian mystics, the Cambridge Platonists and scores of others. "The mystics form an invisible brotherhood scattered through all lands and times; though separated by space and time they reach hands to each other and agree in saying that God and man are separated only in outer appearance, both are indissolubly one. In spiritual transport they utter the great mystical prayer — "I am Thou and Thou art I." (Heiler — Prayer. E.T. p. 191.).

Mysticism is latent in the world's subconsciousness. It is what all sincere people dream of but what earth hath not yet known. The modernists in every religion are preparing the way for it. Ernst Troeltsch and Dr Inge declare that Christianity, if it is to be saved from formalism & excessive institutionalism, must return to the mystic standpoint. It is unfortunate however, that when mysticism is coming into its own, a theologian of the eminence of Karl Barth, regarded by some as the "Church's greatest living thinker",

should remain a stranger to its true
Spirit and implications. Barth contends
23 that we are in the region of the subjective
in mystic experience and God as the
Objective will always remain on the other
side of experience. So long as we insist in
experience, Barth tells us we have in the
place of God, the "questionable figment of
our thoughts." Brunner in his "Theology
of Crisis" distinguishes three modes of
apprehension: the scientific which deals
with external facts; the metaphysical
which is concerned with underlying
principles; and a third mode, "when one
no longer seeks with Philistine concern
for practical values; when one seeks not
with cold scientific objectivity, or with
a serene aesthetic outlook upon the world,
but with the passion of a drowning man
who desperately cries for help. It is the
burning quest of the total personality in
which the mystic also lays stress.

Barthian theology insists on a
Second birth, and this is preserved in
the mystic religion as well. Even as we
were born into our temporal life, we must
be "born again" into the life of spirit. We
can be reborn into eternity while in time.
"The soul must be turned about" if the rays of
the true light are to fall upon it.

The negative descriptions of the Supreme
and the doctrine of Māyā which
are said to be the characteristics
of Hindu mysticism are employed

to denote the distance between time and eternity, between appearance and reality. God is the unknown, the absolutely different, the Beyond who cannot be comprehended by our concepts or recognized by our understanding. "God is ever transcendent to man, new, remote, foreign, surpassing, never in man's sphere, never man's possession: who so says God, says miracle." (Karl Barth. The Epistle to the Romans - E.T. by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns. (1933) p. 21). (See also p. 315).

24 As God is the totally other, knowledge of God must come from God himself. The Upanisad says — "He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained". The power of truth is identical with God Himself. The disclosure of this gift is a free gift. It is God's own choice. The only way in which we can prepare for it is by sacrificing our life and all, by ~~stripping~~ standing stripped and naked before God. Unless the individual is wholly impoverished he cannot earn his saving. The one cry of the man who has an apprehension of the Absolute and his own distance from it, is that he is a sinner, pāpo'ham. Religion is born in agony. When man feels this utter isolation he is miserable. But this tragedy is also the glory of man. The very ability of man to receive and retain an impression of God's revelation, his struggle to give visible expression to the divine life, is the proof of the God in him. When we feel our difference from God, it is His transcendence that strikes us. The mystic while acknowledging the utter transcendence of

God, will not agree that man is utterly depraved and utterly incapable of getting back to God. How else can we account for the joy of religious experience of the prophet and the apostle, of the seer and the Saint who feel they are new ones, with the duality of their life dissolved? Barth describes it in glowing terms — "There is here no fear, for perfect love has cast it out ——— There is dissolved the terrible weight which infinity imposes on what is finite. ——— The Spirit which we have received and by which we have passed from death to life, brings this duality to an end."

The Upanisad says brahmābhayam, there is no fear in God. When the vision is attained duality is at an end. "God Himself and God only." Eternity and time, "immortality and death" says the Mahābhāratha, "the two together are found in the human being; by delusion we enter into death; by the pursuit of truth we gain life eternal." Human life is complex, it is both confusion and clarity, sinfulness and hope. When the Upanisads speak of "That Thou art" they do not mean that we are divine in an easy and obvious way: they assert that divinity is the manifest destiny of man. "That thou shalt become" with effort and struggle when you shake off your ego. The death of the rebellious ego is the condition of the

birth of the Son of God. If there are no crucifixions, there can be no resurrections.

The mystic would agree that ~~that~~ creeds and dogmas ~~are~~ are not fate but lead to fate. "words are weariness" as the Upanisad says, if they do not transfigure us. The Spiritual cannot be achieved by the ethical. Nāsty akritah Kritena, - all work is dust and ashes for Sankara. Salvation by works is impossible for all action is empirical and cannot have transcendental consequences. While all this emphasizes the distance between the empirical and the transcendental, the mystic religion affirms that there is a relation between the two. We can pass from time to eternity, from appearance to reality, otherwise there is no point in such e passages as "Be ye holy even as I am holy" or "Be ye perfect."

Barth holds that God creates crises in the lives of men and the affairs of man kind. The Logos constitutes the personality of Jesus; Virgin Birth and Resurrection become all important. As to why Jesus took over human nature and died on the Cross, it is a mystery unfathomable by man. God stands outside the process and calls men according to His purpose. The almighty irrevocably decided the fate of each individual long before he called them

into existence & has predestined millions to his hatred and to eternal damnation with that object he gave them being.

This despair of human nature which underlies Barthian theology is the reflection of the social situation. For the blind faith of the materialists, Barth substitutes the over ruling providence of God. Such a view persuades us to believe that everything that happens is divine, and for effecting changes in the world we have to wait for miracles. What the age needs is faith in a Kingdom which is not of this world, where life consists not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace and joy. With all its ascetic and other worldly emphasis, mysticism is more adequate to the facts of religious experience and social needs than Barthian theology.

Every attempt of the historical religions to regain universalism, is bringing them nearer to India. The increasing interest in Indian religions is due to the consciousness that mysticism has had a more successful chance in them. That it originated in India is now practically admitted. That it influences the western tradition is not denied by the learned. If thousands of the more open-minded among Christians and Agnostics, find that these new ideas from the East, have more power to quicken their religious aspirations, it is a matter for rejoicing. Max Muller declared

that if he were asked from where we may draw that "corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life alone but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India. Perhaps Christianity may find her rebirth today in the heritage of India.

The coming together of two great civilizations not so widely separated in some of the main sources of their strength. has caused some harsh spiritual discords political tragedy and personal agony. It has, however unrivalled opportunities for the shaping of the future. Indian life & thought have been transformed & her mind has been given a new direction. Her political subjection has not completely deprived her of her soul. Lord Lindlithgow said — "Perhaps the West will find in India's more general emphasis on simplicity and the ultimate spirituality of things, a more positive example of the truths which the most advanced minds of the West are now discovering ——— ".